1: Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23

411 (5) There are other varieties of spears distinguished by minor differences; but one is used for a purpose which is perhaps unique. This is the *dega* or *kane*, which has a spiral of white feathers winding about it from top to bottom. The *dega* is not so much a weapon of offence as a standard meant for display and, as I was assured, the intimidation of the foe. When Sir William MacGregor saw a flotilla of war canoes ascending the river Musa one early morning in the year 1895, he remarked in particular 'two big men, each standing erect in the hull of a fine war canoe, one at each end of the square platform. They were in complete martial panoply, covered by paint and plumes, and each, as he remained in an attitude as stiff and silent as a pillar of stone, held his right hand on a great tall war spear, which he held erect, the lower end resting on the bottom of the canoe. These two spears were nearly covered with white feathers from end to end'. These spears, used by the kindred people of the Musa, were no doubt identical with the *dega* of the Orokaiva, which in these times of peace has been relegated from the hand of the warrior to that of the Taro man.[1]

[514 516]

Wooden 'Swords'. The wooden sword (*asivo*) is a blade-shaped length of black palm-wood usually some 3 feet 6 inches long. The point and edges are not so sharp as to pierce or cut, and the weapon is virtually a club. Being used with two hands, it is much less unwieldy than the stone-headed club, and probably gains in effectiveness by its lightness. The *asivo* is often painted and befeathered.

Woman's Quarterstaff. The woman's quarterstaff (*poreba*) is a long light staff of knotty hard-wood. Every able-bodied woman will keep one just underneath the raised floor of her house, where it is ready for a brawl. She carries it in a characteristic manner, resting on the crown of her head and held on either side in her hands. There is a certain technique in its use, and it is said to be correct, when warding off a blow, to hold the *poreba* simply between thumb and forefinger, with the fingers extended. Women bear their part in inter-village affrays and are not infrequently guilty of

[1] *Annual Report*, 1895–6, p. 27; and cf. *ibid.*, p. 14. The *Dega* is now frequently affected by Taro men, though I cannot say with what significance.